THE THIRD DECAD.

To M. *Smith*, and M. *Rob.* Ring-leaders of the late Separation at *Amsterdam.*

EPIST. I. *Setting forth their injury done to the Church, the injustice of their cause, and fearefulnesse of their offence: Censuring and advising them.*

WE heare of your separation, and mourne; yet not so much for you, as for your wrong: you could not doe a greater injury to your Mother, then to flie from her. Say she were poore, ragged, weake; say she were deformed; yet she is not infectious: Or if she were, yet she is yours. This were cause enough for you, to lament her, to pray for her, to labour for her redresse, not to avoid her: This unnaturalnesse is shamefull; and more hainous in you, who are reported not parties in this evill, but authors. Your flight is not so much, as your mis-guidance. Plead not: this fault is past excuse. If we all should follow you, this were the way, of a Church (as you plead) imperfect, to make no Church; and of a remedie, to make a disease. Still the fruit of our charity to you, is, besides our griefe, pitie. Your zeale of truth hath mis-led you, and you others: A zeale, if honest, yet blind-folded, and led by selfe-will. O that you loved Peace, but halfe so well as Truth: then, this breach had never beene: and you that are yet brethren, had beene still companions. *Goe out of Babylon*, you say; The voice not of Schisme, but of holinesse. Know you where you are? Looke about you, I beseech you, looke behind you; and see if we have not left it upon our backs. Shee her selfe feels, and sees that she is abandoned: and complaines to all the world, that we have not onely forsaken, but spoiled her; and yet you say, *Come out of Babylon.* And except you will be willingly blind, you may see the heaps of her Altars, the ashes of her Idols, the ruines of her monuments, the condemnation of her errours, the revenge of her abominations. And are we yet in *Babylon?* Is *Babylon* yet amongst us? Where are the maine buildings of that accursed City; those high and proud Towers of their universall Hierarchie, infallible judgement, dispensation with the Lawes of God, and sinnes of men; disposition of Kingdomes, deposition of Princes, parting stakes with God in our conversion, through freedome of will; in our salvation, through the merit of our works? Where are those rotten heaps (rotten not through age, but corruption) of transubstantiating of bread, adoring of Images, multitude of Sacraments, power of Indulgences, necessitie of Confessions, profit of Pilgrimages, constrained and approved Ignorance, unknowne Devotions? Where are those deepe vaults (if not mynes) of Penances and Purgatories, and whatsoever hath beene devised by those Popelings, whether profitable or glorious, against the Lord and his Christ? Are they not all rased, and buried in the dust? Hath not the Majesty of her Gods, like as was done to [illegible], long agone altered

red to the publique laughter of the vulgar? What is this but to goe, yea to run (if not to flie) out of *Babylon*? But (as every man is an hearty Patron of his owne actions, and it is a desperate cause that hath no plea) you alledge our conforting in Ceremonies, and say still we tarry in the suburbs. Grant that these were as ill, as an enemie can make them, or can pretend them: You are deceived, if you think the walls of *Babylon* stand upon Ceremonies. Substantiall errours are both her foundation, and frame. These rituall observations are not so much as Tile and Reed, rather like to some Fane upon the roofe; for ornament, more then use: Not parts of the building, but not necessary appendances. If you take them otherwise, you wrong the Church; if thus, and yet depart, you wrong it and your selfe: As if you would have perswaded righteous *Lot* not to stay in *Zoar*, because it was so neere *Sodome*. I feare, if you had seene the money-changers in the Temple, how ever you would have prayed, or taught there: Christ did it, not forsaking the place, but scourging the offenders: And this is the valour of Christian teachers: To oppose abuses, not to runne away from them: Where shall you not thus find *Babylon*? Would you have run away from *Geneva*, because of her wafers? Or from *Corinth*, for her disordered love-feasts? Either run out of the world, or your flight is in vaine. If experience of change teach you not, that you shall find your *Babylon* every where, returne not. Compare the place you have left, with that you have chosen; let not feare of seeming to repent oversoone, make you partiall. Loe, there is a common harbour of all opinions, of all heresies; if not a mixture. Here you drew in the free and cleare aire of the Gospell, without that odious composition of *Iudaisme*, *Arrianisme*, *Anabaptisme*: There you live in the stench of these and more. You are unworthy of pitie, if you will approve your misery. Say if you can, that the Church of *England* (if she were not yours) is not an heaven to *Amsterdam*. How is it then, that our gnats are harder to swallow, then their camels? and that whiles all Christendome magnifies our happinesse, and applauds it; your handfull alone, so detests our enormities, that you despise our graces? See whether in this you make not God a loser. The thank of all his favours is lost, because you want more: and in the meane time, who gaines by this sequestration, but *Rome* and *Hell*? How doe they insult in this advantage, that our mothers owne children condemne her for uncleane, that we are daily weakned by our divisions, that the rude multitude hath so palpable a motive to distrust us? Sure, you intended it not: but, if you had beene their hired Agent, you could not have done our enemies greater service. The God of heaven open your eyes, that you may see the unjustice of that zeale which hath transported you; and turne your heart to an endeavour of all Christian satisfaction; otherwise, your soules shall find too late, that it had beene a thousand times better to swallow a Ceremonie, then to rend a Church: yea, that even whoredomes and murders shall abide an easier answer then separation. I have done, if onely I have advised you of that fearefull threatning of the Wiseman: *The eye that mocketh his father, and despiseth the government of his mother, the Ravens of the valley shall picke it out, and the young Eagles eat it.*

To Sir Andrew Asteley.

Ep. II. *A discourse of our due preparation for death, and the meanes to sweeten it to us.*

SInce I saw you, I saw my father die: How boldly and merrily did he passe throw the gates of death, as if they had had no terror, but much pleasure! Oh that I could as easily imitate, as not forget him! We know we must tread the same way; how happy, if with the same mind? Our life, as it gives way to death, so must make way for it: it will be, though we will not: it will not be happie, without our will, without our preparation. It is the best and longest lesson, to learne how to die; and of surest use: which alone if we take not out, it were better not to have lived. Oh vaine studies of men, how to walke thorough *Rome* streets all day in the shade, how to